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California Office of Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Series #9

California Register of Historical Resources: Questions and Answers for Property Owners

How does the California Register define a historical resource?

For the purposes of listing, a "historical resource" includes, but is not limited to, "any object, building, structure, site, area or place which is historically or archeologically significant, or is significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military or cultural annals of California" and which meets the criteria for listing. Historical resources of local, state and national significance may be eligible for listing in the California Register if they satisfy the criteria established by the State Historical Resources Commission for this program.

What are the criteria for listing a resource in the California Register?

To be eligible for listing in the California Register, a resource must be significant at the local, state, or national level under one or more of the following four criteria:

1. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States; or
2. It is associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history; or
3. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method or construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values; or
4. It has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.

How does a resource become listed in the California Register?

Resources may be added in three ways.

- 1) Some are listed automatically, including California State Historical Landmarks from number 770 onward and all properties listed on, or formally determined eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places.
- 2) State Historical Landmarks below number 770 and State Points of Historical Interest will be individually evaluated and recommended for listing on the California Register based on procedures to be developed by the State Historical Resources Commission.
- 3) Other resources can be nominated to the California Register by local governments, private organizations or citizens; these include individual resources, historical

resources contributing to the significance of an historical district, resources identified in an historical resources survey with a significance rating of 1 to 5 and resources designated as local landmarks or listed by city or county ordinance.

What are the benefits of being listed in the California Register?

Local ordinances may provide benefits to property owners of listed resources, such as Mills Act local property tax incentives. Additionally, the State Historical Building Code mandates that reasonable alternatives be applied when the use of the Uniform Building Code threatens the historical integrity of a resource.

What protection does listing in the California Register offer?

Listing in the California Register, or any other registration program in California, does not guarantee that a resource will not be altered or destroyed. Projects that will affect historical resources may be subject to review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). All projects carried out by public agencies are subject to environmental review as are projects involving privately owned properties when a discretionary permit or review is required. For questions related to a specific resource and CEQA review, please contact the local government or state agency with jurisdiction over the project.

Can a resource be removed from the California Register?

The regulations for the California Register allow for properties to be removed from listing if the following criteria are satisfied (pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Section 4856.a):

1. The historical resource, through demolition, alteration or loss of integrity, has lost its historic qualities or potential to yield information; or
2. New information or analysis shows that the historical resource was not eligible at the time of its listing.

If you wish to have your property removed from the California Register, you must provide the following documentation (pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Section 4856.b):

1. A written request recommending the removal of the resource, including a detailed justification based on the removal criteria listed above;
2. Photographs and other documentation regarding the current condition of the resource;
3. Photographic and archival documentation of the resource at the time of listing; and
4. Complete current ownership information for the resource.

How can I get more information on the California Register of Historical Resources?

We have various handouts available on the California Register as well as on the other registration programs administered by our office and on incentives for the preservation of historical resources. If you're interested in these or other topics, please contact the Office of Historic Preservation, Department of Parks and Recreation, P.O. Box 942896, Sacramento CA 94296-0001, phone: (916) 653-9432, fax: (916) 653-9824; email: calshpo.jenan@quiknet.com.

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